2: Caroe S-4 (no date) 1953 RL1 Soviet Central Asia RL2

III

PATTERN OF PEOPLES

Few cases, perhaps, in romance or history, can sustain a close collation with this as to the complexity of its separate interests.

DE QUINCEY, Revolt of the Tartars

WE see a land wide and open like the ocean, closed in by the barriers of high mountain on one side and the unharvested desert or inhospitable inland waters on the other. Before the railways were built, in one quarter only, the north-east, was there comparatively easy passage from outside. And in restricted regions only, along the foothills of these mountains, and within their glens, or farther along the rivers which issue from them, is there a certain livelihood to be won through a settled agriculture. Elsewhere the steppe and the hillside offer a life only to the nomad, equipped to move his flocks and herds in pursuit of a precarious rainfall and an uncertain season. We shall expect then to find two forms of subsistence, the intensive cultivation of the oasis by the farmer bound to traditional uses, and the wandering life of the stockbreeder on the Alpine pasture or the steppe.

Many of the flatlands of what is now Russian Central Asia are farther from the sea than any part of the world land-mass save Sinkiang alone. Hence the uncertain precipitation in all but the mountain regions, and the need for the herdsman to wander far afield in search of pasture for his flocks. There are recurrent years of famine without winter snow or spring rain, years which are really reminders of the peril of desiccation hanging over these countries. It is this that has driven the pastoralist in history to become a nomad, wandering over the steppe almost as urgently as the tribes of Arabia in their

2: Caroe S-4 (no date) 1953 RL1 Soviet Central Asia RL1

are introduced to banquets spread out in garden pavilions, where *Kolkhoz* officials uneasily may take their ease.[1]

The cultivated lands of the southern oases are in a favoured part of the earth's surface. They are indeed restricted, but acre for acre, they are probably among the most productive in Asia. Throughout history the population was thick on the land and, once subdued, could be subjected to police control village by village without being able to put up much of a resistance. State management of the essential water-supply gave to authority the final weapon that could scarcely be gainsaid. Even the second Revolution could not destroy the natural prosperity of such favoured lands as these. But on the steppe and in the mountains it was different.

THE NOMADS

In order to understand the situation facing the Soviet planners of the collective farm in the wide unirrigated territory north of the Sir Darya, and in the more remote mountain glens, it is necessary to have some insight into the meaning of Central Asian nomadism. There are two forms of nomadism: that of the spreading open steppe, and that of the nomads who move with the season to the mountains. The first form, that of the steppe, is not unlike the nomadism of the Beduin in the Arabian deserts, for much of the steppe melts into a desert colder and less hospitable than Arabia. It has indeed a considerable snow precipitation, and therefore usually affords excellent pasture when the snows melt in the spring. But

[1] Cf. Coates, *op. cit.* pp. 232-4. This contains an amusing account of a princely entertainment offered in 1947 in the garden surrounding his private house near Tashkent by the Uzbek chairman of a *Kolkhoz*. The meal was spread in a pavilion — one among many — looking down a garden avenue, flanked with vines laden with grapes. The first course consisted of pies, sausages, bread and cakes, fried pelmets, fruit, almonds, sweets, wine and cognac, with soup, tea and yoghurt as aids to digestion. There followed the *pièce de résistance*, a pilav, an hour's gorged rest and to finish up a rich dessert of melons, grapes and other fruit. 'What', asked the visitors, 'has become of the former owners of the land?' 'Some', replied the chairman, 'were killed during the fighting, others had fled the USSR, but some of the younger people have settled down to honest labour. The son of my former master, for instance, is now a member of this *Kolkhoz*.'

2: Caroe S-4 (no date) 1953 RL1 Soviet Central Asia RL1

subsequent rainfall may be precarious and the owners of flocks and herds often have to move many miles in pursuit of grass. Except about latitude 50 degrees, where the steppe reaches the zone where crops can be grown without irrigation, much of it is bare but for seasonal grazing. Before the Soviet cataclysm the various tribes had recognized ranges which in bad seasons would overlap and lead them into tribal warfare. Or a stronger tribal combination might oust a weaker. The form of life was not unlike that of the sailor in a primitive age, when each ship had to fend for itself and be on watch for enemies or pirates. Endurance, courage, a free and adventurous spirit, counted high in the scale of human values, but, as at sea, there had to be leadership, for without discipline all might perish. It was the same tradition that produced the Khans of the Golden Horde, and later, when the Russians came, gave birth to men such as Abilay and his grandson Kine Sari Khan. The tradition of reverence for the Khan died hard. It is not dead yet.

The tribal background was the same for the mountains as for the steppe, but the hill Uzbeks and Kirghiz, the peoples of mountain Turkdom, had to face climatic conditions of a different order to those upon the steppe. As we know, a large part of Turkistan consists of very high mountains standing over deep valleys, and it is possible for a man to change his climate in a few hours, or at most in a day or two. In Farghana and the Tajik valleys, for instance, the heat in summer is fierce and the lower-lying land, unless irrigated (and that is needed for cropping), burnt brown. But a short journey leads the shepherd to flowery Alpine meadows (*Yaylaks*), where his flocks can pasture at their ease. In the same country in winter the *yaylaks* will be deep under snow, but at that season the skirts of the hills afford a comparatively clement refuge and a good pasture. So the shepherd would move up and down with the seasons. And because the land is so free and large, and not over-crowded, he would have little need to store up winter food; some part of his accustomed range would suffice for his animals right through the year.

2: Cause 3-4 (no date) 1953 RL1 Soviet Central Asia RL1

Soviets to retain Kazakistan as a part of the RSFSR (the Great Russian republic) up to 1936. It was only then, as it was openly stated, that it became possible and safe to confer on 'the Kazaks' even the circumscribed and illusory autonomy enjoyed by a non-Russian constituent republic. The delay is the more remarkable given the very large proportion of Russians in Kazakistan.

THE STOCK

The story is not yet complete. Herdsmen cannot be killed off without loss of the animals which serve them and which they serve. In Kazakistan in 1935 there was only 1·7 head of cattle for each household grouped in a collective farm, and 6500 collective farms were altogether without a herd. The livestock losses over the whole republic in the six years 1928–1934 were estimated at 73 per cent of the cattle, 87 per cent of the sheep, and 83 per cent of the horses.[1] The real wealth of the country in men and livestock had been sacrificed on the altar of the collective deity, and there is reason to think that the losses then suffered have not been restored even today.

A study of the current Soviet press on the subject of stock-raising and stock-farming throughout Soviet Central Asia reveals an attitude and atmosphere of inspissated gloom. In Uzbekistan, for instance, it is admitted that progress has been thoroughly unsatisfactory; the required increase in the number of publicly-owned sheep and cattle has in no case been achieved, the organization of winter feeding has broken down, and what is called mass-political work among the *Kolkhoz* and *Sovkoz* workers on the collective farms has been ineffective. The same tale comes from Kirghizia and Kazakistan, and also from the Tajik Republic. To go even farther afield, it is repeated in strident tones from the Caucasus, where special complaint is made of delays in the mechanization and electrification of processes in the care of stock. Plans have not been fulfilled; veterinary services, irrigation, scientific

[1] Soviet sources quoted by M. Holdsworth, Bib. II, 9.

2: Caroe S-4 (no date) 1953 RL1 Soviet Central Asia RL1

research work — all are lagging. In Turkmenia nearly half the *Kolkhozes* at the beginning of 1951 had not the minimum number of sheep, and things were even worse for horned cattle. A search for scapegoats has begun. Bagirov, the secretary of the Central Committee of the Party in Azerbaijan and heresy-hunter of the deviationists who praised the North Caucasian XIXth-century patriot Shamil, entered the lists with an attack on the Minister of Agriculture, Abdullaev. Abdullaev and his deputies Nagyzade and Barbaev — all, by the way, of Azerbaijani stock — are accused by him of nepotism and corrupt practices. The widespread nature of the complaints, extending as they do from the Tienshan to the Black Sea, suggests that the malady is attributable to deeper causes. What can those causes be?

The first and obvious reason is that the policy of destruction of nomadism was unsuited to the climatic conditions of Central Asia and to the aptitudes of the people. In the semi-desert of the steppe, or in the sharp contrasts of mountainside and glen, with all the variations brought about by season and altitude, there exists a stage on which it is difficult, if not impossible, for men or animals to survive unless they adapt themselves to a migratory life. The Soviet agronomists talk of winter storage. But the production of fodder-crops or winter-feed cannot easily replace these rotational pastures. Mountain and steppe pastures do not produce long grass very suitable for hay or silage, even if it could be transported with the seasons, and the irrigated fields, on which it could be produced, are all required for cash or grain crops. In other words, the right economic system for stock-raising, imposed by this climate and its contrasts, is a form of nomadism and nothing else.

All dictators, of course, dislike nomads, so hard to reach and tax, or in any way to discipline or organize. It was so with Reza Shah of Persia, also a dictator, whose main and unfulfilled ambition was to settle all the nomadic tribes of Persia. And inevitably it has been so with the Soviets. It is because autocracy has given way to this irrational dislike and

2: Caroe S-4 (no date) 1953 RL1 Soviet Central Asia RL1

tried to substitute a social and economic organization which defies nature and defeats the tried and tested initiative of the local stock-breeders, that this experiment has been such a ghastly failure. There is need of another Lenin, courageous enough to admit defeat and inaugurate a New Economic Policy for the animals.

233 Of all this there is no mention in the stream of invective that pours from Soviet publicists on this subject. The Party line is quite otherwise. Defects are due, they cry, to insufficient Party-political and educational work among the stock-breeders. Leading workers do not concern themselves with the matter, but leave it to subordinates. The managers of stock *Kolkhozes* do not understand the importance of mechanization. Fodder supplies are not made available — here there is a shadow of the truth; irrigation works have not been reorganized. Winter pasturing is insufficient and badly arranged; the local Soviets in many districts fail to assume responsibility. And hear Bagirov. Great harm had been done, he said, by over-concentration on cotton-growing, and neglect of stock. The total of stock was still below the figure of 1940, and there was negligence in the provision of fodder. Blame was due not only to the Minister and his deputies but to all Party officials. They had themselves neglected the interests of stock-breeders, and had allowed embezzlement. People of doubtful honesty were kept as officials. The Ministry did not check them but actually defended them. The *Sovkhozes* — State farms — were almost as bad as the *Kolkhozes*. And so on — without a hint of the essentials of the art of animal management.

In all this there is yet another and more subtle failure. It has been remarked that the beginnings of Soviet stock-rearing in Asiatic Russia were not encouraging, for an iron system failed to allow for that elasticity of adjustment which alone can secure a satisfactory return to the stock-farm. But it is impossible to read these diatribes without concluding that the failure goes deeper even than that. The bond between herdsman and herd, between man and the animal which serves him and which he serves, is in essence a close and individual

5: Pipes S-4 (1953) 1955 RL1 Turkestan RL1

faithfully observed by the Turkestan natives; those of the steppe region were less strict, prevented as they were by the exigencies of nomadic and seminomadic life. During Ramazan, Muslim communities in Central Asia customarily reversed their routine, resting daytimes, eating and entertaining at night. Shortly after the end of the fast there occurs a major holiday, *kurban bayram* (feast of sacrifice), attended by the slaughter of sheep and by festivities. 785

The difficulties of observing the Ramazan fast in the Soviet Union are obvious at first sight. To eliminate or even reduce daytime work for a period of a month is possible only for a people economically independent; it is inconceivable in a society in which virtually every breadwinner is an employee of the state, and the state drives relentlessly to increase production. Furthermore, a worker who fasts all day is, even when compelled to do a full day's work, a poor worker. As a result, the Ramazan fast is severely repressed by the authorities and can survive only in a greatly modified form. 785 177

Several of the refugees recalled instances of Communist Party officials subjecting Muslims suspected of fasting to "tests." Thus, for example, many Muslim employees of state institutions were called in for conferences with their superiors sometime during the month of Ramazan and there offered a drink or a cigarette; refusal to accept the offer was tantamount to an admission of fasting and could lead to expulsion from work. Similar "tests" were recalled by schoolteachers — during Ramazan teams of officials from neighboring towns often visited schools and checked on both the teachers and the students.

Nevertheless, the observance of the fast, although severely restricted, appears to have partly survived. Some Muslims, unable to fast for 28 consecutive days, compromise by abstaining for three days only: the 1st, 15th, and last days of Ramazan. Others, compelled to eat in order to have strength for work and to avoid the suspicion of authorities, eat and drink as little as possible. It is quite likely — although there is no direct evidence — that the fast may be observed more regularly among those who are not gainfully employed.

The *kurban bayram*, despite its originally religious significance, appears to have suffered the fate of most religious festivities in societies which are secularized or on their way to becoming so: the religious element has largely been forgotten, and the holiday has acquired a predominantly secular, national character. This, in part, may be one of the reasons for its survival. Almost all the informants agreed that the *kurban bayram* was widely observed at least until the outbreak of the war, even by members of the Communist Party. The main difficulty in observing this holiday is the shortage of sheep, which are essential for the ceremony. Not only are almost all the sheep in the hands of the *kolkhozy* (collective farms) and 782 796 177 233

5: Pipes S-4 (1953) 1955 RLl Turkestan RLl

782 796 177 233 *sovkhozy* (state farms) — four-fifths, according to the Soviet Encyclopedia — which do not release them for religious purposes, but the over-all number of sheep and goats in Turkestan has declined from 3 per native in 1913 to approximately 1.5 per native in 1938. Compromises and subterfuges are resorted to to overcome this difficulty. In some collective farms the sheep are stolen or slaughtered under one pretext or another, often with the tacit acquiescence of the collective's chairman. In the cities, the well-to-do purchase sheep on the free market, while the less affluent either enter into partnerships with other families to purchase and divide one ram, or else, if they are even too poor for that, sacrifice a chicken instead. The *kurban bayram* seems to be observed less publicly than in pre-Revolutionary years, and usually only in the circle of the immediate family, "with the windows shut and the doors locked," as several refugees put it.

735 177 The third fundamental Muslim duty is that of regular alms giving, known as *zakat*, traditionally set at 2.5 percent of earnings. In Central Asia the *zakat* had lost even before the Russian conquest in the 19th century the character of a purely philanthropic measure, having been transformed into a *de facto* tax, collected for the benefit of the local secular authorities. The tsarist administration did its best to suppress this practice in territories under its control, replacing it with its own system of taxes. Today, nothing seems to remain of the *zakat* in Soviet Central Asia. The practice had no deep roots to begin with; the population is too impoverished to keep it up; and there is no one to collect it. Almost none of the refugees even knew the meaning of the term *zakat*, and upon being informed, denied ever seeing it practiced.

788 177 Finally, there is the obligation of performing the pilgrimage to Mecca, the *hajj*. Of all the duties incumbent upon a Muslim this is the one most difficult to fulfill under Soviet conditions, inasmuch as the regime forbids travel of private citizens abroad for any purpose whatsoever. Occasionally, as in 1953, the Soviet government itself dispatches to Mecca official delegations headed by government-appointed muftis and shaykhs, but it is quite obvious that such delegations consist only of carefully screened individuals, liberally interspersed with employees of the security police, and that their primary purpose is not religion but foreign propaganda. For the private individual, the road to Mecca is barred. It appears, however, that pilgrimages to the graves of local saints continue to be popular, and in some sense may serve as a substitute for the forbidden *hajj*.

Thus, of the four practices which constitute the central elements of the Islamic ritual, the five Pillars of the Faith (the fifth being the profession of faith), one (prayer) is almost entirely neglected by the younger and middle-age groups, one (fasting) is observed rarely and even then imperfectly, and two (*zakat* and *hajj*) have completely disappeared. Religious *ritual* thus may be said to have declined considerably and no longer

3: Czaplicka E-4 (no date) 1918 RL4 Turkic Peoples
Turkestan RL1

districts: 1, Tomsk; 2, Krasnoyarsk-Achinsk; 3, Southern Steppes; 4, Yenisei; 5, Altai; 6, Minusinsk; 7, Northern Steppes. Probably some gold deposits could be found in Bokhara and Turkestan. 135

The silver deposits are found in great number in the Altai and north of Semipalatinsk. The richest deposits of coal, iron, and copper are found in the district between Novo-Nikolaevsk, Tomsk, Barnaul, and Kuznietsk; also in the region of Semipalatinsk. The Kuznietsk basin alone occupies some 15,000 sq. klm.

The best-known oilfields are situated on the western coast of the Caspian. But it is possible that the Transcaspian oilfields, now almost entirely limited to Chikishliar and some other points along the railway, may prove to be no less abundant. In Ferghana the oilfields are being exploited in four regions: 1, Shar-Su; 2, Maili-Su; 3, Chimionand; 4, Sel-Kokko, but so far the export is fairly limited; in 1914 it amounted to some 2,000,000 puds.

But it is cereals that form the most important product of export from Western Siberia, and 90 per cent. of the population is devoted to agriculture. Agriculture is found chiefly between 60° of N. lat. and 50° of S. lat. Beyond these limits the country is only half agricultural; while fishing, shooting, and cattle-breeding is carried on alongside. Out of some 12 million dess. occupied by cornfields in Asiatic Russia in 1911, some 4½ millions were situated in Western Siberia, 2½ millions in the Steppe country, and 3½ millions in Turkestan. The chief centres of the corn export are Novo-Nikolaevsk, Omsk, Kurgan, Pyetukhovo, Barnaul, and Semipalatinsk. In 1906–10 average early export = 93,014·4 thousand puds. 241 [62] [439]

Closely connected with agriculture is sheep-breeding, which is especially carried on in the Kirghis Steppes. While in European Russia at the outbreak of war for a hundred inhabitants there were only 32 sheep, in Russian Central Asia it amounted to some 200. The area of pasture land in Western Siberia amounted to some six million dess.; in the Steppe country some three million, and in Turkestan half 233

3: Czaplicka E-4 (no date) 1918 RL4 Turkic Peoples
Turkestan RL1

a million. Next to sheep in importance is the breeding of horses and cows. In the cattle-breeding area the butter industry is very successfully carried on, especially in the governments of Tomsk and Tobolsk, and the chief centres of its export are Barnaul, Omsk, and Kurgan. In 1913 the exports equalled 4·9 million puds as against 1·7 million puds in 1903. Closely allied to these industries is the export of live stock, bacon, game, wool, hair, skins and furs. But although they occupy a considerable place, it is the corn which comes first in quantity and cotton first in value among all Central Asiatic products. The pre-war export along the railway shows the following proportion between the various goods: Corn, 35·6 per cent. (of all exported goods); cotton, 4·3 per cent.; butter, 1·5 per cent.; fish, 1·2 per cent.; meat, 1·0 per cent.

In the production of corn Western Siberian ranks first; 7 per cent. of the native population scarcely take any part in this industry; while out of 93 per cent. of European population, 87 per cent. is composed of Great Russians, on whom agriculture chiefly depends. The cattle- and especially sheep-breeding depend to a great extent on the Kirghis and other Turkic tribes, forming 50 per cent. of the population in the Akmolinsk and 85 per cent. in the Semipalatinsk territories. But it is the cotton industry which almost entirely rests upon the native (Sarts and other Turkic tribes) labour.

The cotton industry is closely connected with irrigation, and again the irrigation canals form the most valuable possession of the natives. The canals seem to have been much more numerous in ancient times, and the remnants of them are found even in such barren deserts as Kizyl-Kumakh or Gary-ishek-otran. The native law codes (*shariat* as well as *'ādat*) recognize that the water is common property, which cannot be sold or bought, and that the land belongs to him who irrigates it. To look after the equal use of the irrigation canals, called *aryka*, an elder, called *mirab*, is chosen from among one settlement, and over several *mirabs* an *aryk-*